

CENTIPEDE GRASS LAWNS —

Centi-Seed vs. Sprigs Planting & Care

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Grateful acknowledgement is hereby made of the help given by the Agricultural Research Administration, Bureau of Plant Industry, Beltsville Maryland, including their extensive tests with different varieties of Centipede in Southeastern states, and of the help given by Dr. Glenn W. Burton, Senior Geneticist, Coastal Plain Experiment Station, Tifton, Georgia, who discovered that Centipede grass seed could be produced in commercial quantities.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Centipede grass is a native of Asia. It was introduced into the United States in 1919 from China and since then has been distributed over Southern states from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

It is a low growing perennial which spreads by stolons that resemble a centipede — hence its name. In appearance it is intermediate between carpet and Bermuda grass. It resembles St. Augustine grass, except that it is finer in texture.

Centipede is green the whole year only in semi-tropical climates, but the period during winter that it turns brown is shorter than for most other summer grasses (despite high-pressure sales bally-hoo, no grass or mixture of grasses has yet been developed that is capable of making a good, permanent, evergreen lawn under average Southern conditions).

Responsible turf specialists have time and again termed Centipede the BEST all-round GRASS for the SOUTH because:

- In appearance it is unsurpassed.
- It thrives in shade or sun.
- It hugs the ground, requires little mowing.
- It makes a dense, permanent, weed-free sod.
- It grows on any soil - - rich or poor.
- It is highly resistant to disease.
- It requires little fertilization.
- It is the best solution to the chinch bug problem.

VARIETIES

Extensive tests with different introductions and strains have been made at Gainesville, Fla. and Tifton, Ga. A number of different types showing marked variation in habit of growth have been isolated, indicating considerable variation within the species. P. I. 72,260 is more vigorous and produces longer leaves than other strains. It produces a heavy mat of grass and is the most desirable for turf purposes. It has withstood temperatures of near zero, but it is not recommended for areas where sub-zero temperatures are common.

It is a favorite lawn grass not only with home owners, but also for factories, public buildings, institutions, cemeteries and golf course fairways.

ADVANTAGES OF SEED

To anyone who has ever tried to establish a lawn by sprigging the advantages of using seed are obvious. At average Centipede sprig prices and minimum wages the cost of sprigs and labor needed for planting a sprig each square foot will run about \$6.00 per thousand square feet.

Seed planted at the recommended seeding rate and given proper care will make a sod in less time than sprigs - - - at about half the cost - - - and the lawn will not be

rough or uneven as are areas that have been sprigged.

Planting Centi-Seed is no problem whereas sprigs must be bought, dug and planted in fresh condition if they are to survive transplanting. The average home owner can plant his lawn with seed in the time he would spend recruiting enough labor to sprig it.

FEATURES OF CENTI-SEED

Centi-Seed is a trademark registered by Patten Seed Company, Lakeland, Georgia, which guarantees that Centi-Seed are the progeny of the genuine Chinese Centipede Grass (P. I. 72,260). Beware of all imitations and substitutions.

By actual count there are more than 400 thousand Centi-Seed per pound—over 25,000 per ounce. They are dark brown and have a hard seed coat. They must be subjected to constant moisture for 10 to 15 days at moderately warm temperatures to germinate. Seed are labeled according to the percentage germinating in a 28-day test, and this germination figure does not include all seed that will sprout. Centi-Seed are triple-tested for germination and only top quality Centipede grass seed bear the Centi-Seed trademark. Those testing 30% or better germination are good for planting.

For best results Centi-Seed should be planted at the minimum rate of 3 ounces per thousand square feet of lawn area, which gives an average of 75 seed per square foot. More seed should be used when quicker coverage is desired, or when planting under adverse conditions.

The best time to plant Centi-Seed is early spring, so as to take advantage of a full growing season. Centi-Seed may be planted year 'round in Coastal areas where mild winters are expected, or through mid-August in areas where harsh winters are common. Centi-Seed WILL NOT sprout in cold soil, but will remain dormant until the soil warms in the spring.

Centi-Seed, dry sand mixture. However, under certain conditions it may be desirable to add common rye grass (winter grass), which sprouts quickly and gives a green sod that will aid in erosion control and moisture conservation. Such conditions are: (1) Late summer or early fall plantings, in which case the rye grass will provide some frost protection and keep the seed or seedlings from being washed away during heavy rains. (2) Plantings made after frost, or near the first frost date, in localities where winters are mild. Such plantings are desirable only where construction of a new home has just been completed and waiting until spring to plant is impractical. (3) Plantings made any time where there is danger of the seed or seedlings being washed away. Rye grass will survive only a short time during hot weather, but makes a soil holding root growth which will serve a useful purpose after the rye grass dies.

To plant Centi-Seed with rye grass, simply mix rye grass and Centi-Seed together with dry sand and sow as recommended below. Use one ounce of Centi-Seed per pound of rye grass. DO NOT USE more than six pounds of rye grass per thousand square feet of lawn area, but increase the foregoing Centi-Seed ratio if you wish quicker Centipede coverage. Be certain to include plenty of sand in the mixture, as Centi-Seed and rye grass alone do not readily make a homogenous mixture. Beware of any mixture of Centipede seed and rye grass that does not bear the Centi-Seed trademark.

Buyers should understand that the use of rye grass will retard the growth and coverage of Centipede grass because of the temporary competition offered by the rye grass.



In the center photograph above Dr. M. E. Thompson, former Governor of Georgia, examines his Centipede lawn at his Valdosta, Ga. home. In the spring of 1951 Dr. Thompson sprigged his front yard with stolons. A year later, Dr. Thompson seeded his rear lawn with Centi-Seed according to the recommendations in this folder. He gave both the sprigged and seeded areas the best of care. The above photographs made September 8, 1952, show the seeded rear lawn in the center and on the left, while the sprigged front lawn is at the right. This is but one of thousands of Centipede lawns planted with Centi-Seed.

ESTABLISHING A NEW LAWN

Establishing a permanent lawn is easier with Centi-Seed and there are a number of practices which can insure success, but there is no formula that has all the work taken out. Those who make common sense application of the following suggestions get the best possible lawn in the least possible time:

1. Prepare a good, soft, loamy seedbed. Grade and level your lawn exactly as you wish it to be forevermore, crushing all large lumps of earth and removing all sticks and stones. If topsoil was removed in preparing your lot for house construction, two to four inches of topsoil should be added to insure good performance of any grass. If you have compacted clay or thirsty sand, you will get better results to add peat moss or sterilized stable manure to "condition" your soil. Several new synthetic soil conditioners may be used successfully on clay.

2. During seedbed preparation mix in 10 to 20 lbs. of any complete fertilizer (Vigoro, Vertagreen, Cross Country lawn fertilizer, or commercial field fertilizer) per thousand square feet.

3. Mix Centi-Seed with an adequate amount of dry sand to insure uniform distribution (roughly 3 ounces of Centi-Seed per bushel of sand). Broadcast on the seedbed by hand, sowing the area in one direction and then crossing it at right angles. Rake lightly but thoroughly with a steel garden rake to get the seed well mixed with the top quarter inch of soil. Do not cover more than three-eighths of an inch.

4. Firm the soil by rolling, or by walking if you do not have a roller. Do not attempt heavy packing.

5. Mulch steep slopes with any type straw available to prevent washing.

6. Wet thoroughly, and continue to water as often as

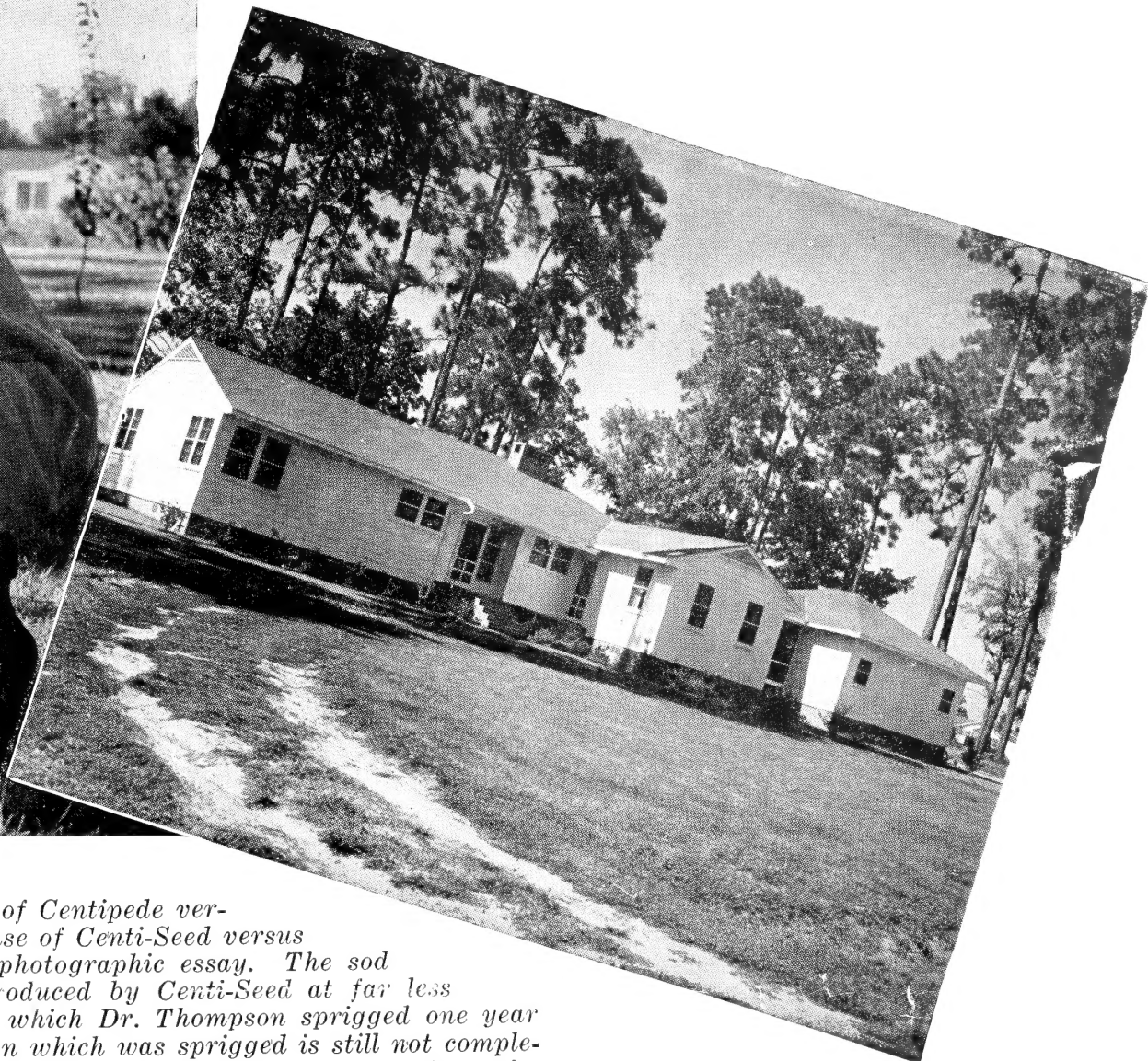
necessary to keep the soil moist at least until the Centipede seedlings have three leaves. Continued watering will hasten coverage, and care should be taken to prevent the soil drying out below the root structure of your seedlings during droughts.

7. Do not fertilize until the seedlings have at least four leaves because the seedlings may be killed by fertilizer until several weeks old. Coverage may be speeded up by a light topdressing of nitrate of soda (maximum of 2 to 4 lbs. per thousand square feet) every four to six weeks AFTER seedlings reach the four leaf stage. CAUTION: Apply nitrogen or fertilizer only in mid-day when the grass is perfectly dry, then water grass well to wash all particles from the leaves.

8. As soon as there is anything to mow, including weeds, which will be present in every lawn, begin mowing to a height of two inches. Mowing will not damage the Centipede seedlings, but will cause them to make a sod quicker.

9. To be sure you know what you are doing and just which of the many plants that are sure to come up in your lawn are Centipede seedlings, plant a dash of Centi-Seed one-fourth inch deep in a cup of soil the same day that you sow your lawn. Keep the cup of soil moist and observe results.

10. Be patient. Other than the nine suggestions above, time is the only thing that is needed for your planting to produce the lawn you dream of. With favorable conditions your life-time lawn may be perfected in as little as four months of warm weather. The time required for making a perfect sod varies greatly, depending on many factors. A few thinly scattered Centipede seedlings will give coverage in a surprisingly short time. Many buyers never identify their seedlings until they begin sending out long runners, which is just a few weeks before complete coverage where a fair stand is



Eloquent testimony in the case of Centipede versus Other Grasses and in the case of Centi-Seed versus Sprigs is found in the above photographic essay. The sod above and at the left was produced by Centi-Seed at far less cost than the sod at the right which Dr. Thompson sprigged one year earlier. Note that the front lawn which was sprigged is still not completely covered. Close examination also reveals furrows caused by the sprigging operation. Appearance is much better on the seeded lawn and it is also smoother and easier on the mowing machine . . . veritably the dream lawn of millions, yet in reach of everyone.

present, so even if you cannot find your seedlings, continue to mow and water.

ESTABLISHING CENTIPEDE IN EXISTING LAWNS

Many lawns were originally planted with mixtures of bunch-type annuals and perennials worth 10c to 50c per pound which sold for \$1.50 per pound produced something green in a hurry, and ended up an eyesore. Seed stores refer to these mixtures as "wonder" grasses, presumably because the owners spend so much time wondering what they have and wondering how to get rid of it.

Others were planted with "inexpensive" Bermuda and carpet grasses that never produced an attractive sod despite the owner's heavy expenditures in effort to get them to do so. Some were planted to St. Augustine and then destroyed or damaged by chinch bugs and other insects and disease. Still others were sold cheap creeping types grasses called Centipede which were just poor imitations.

Many people who bought one "lemon" have shopped around and decided Centipede is the best answer to their problem. Centi-Seed make the task of conversion much simpler, easier, quicker and less expensive.

Even though Centipede is more aggressive than most other grasses and will usually take them over if enough seedlings are established, we think that the conversoin method most satisfactory is complete destruction of the existing sod by whatever method appears to be the most practical. Preparation of a fresh new seedbed and planting and caring for the area as recommended in the portion of this pamphlet dealing with establishing a new lawn will give best results.

The exception to the foregoing recommendation is that

where a Bermuda sod is removed no fertilizer should be used until the Centipede is dominant.

Attempts at "overseeding" or spot planting with Centi-Seed may succeed occasionally but we do not recommend this or any other half-hearted effort for developing a good lawn. Do things right all the way and you'll have years of satisfaction ahead when the neighbors will be admiring and coveting your lawn.

CARE OF CENTIPEDE LAWNS

Once established as a solid sod Centipede needs little care other than occasional mowing. It has no specific lime requirement and normally will need little fertilization for several years after development fertilization. If it begins to turn brown during dry, hot weather, a deep soaking with water will bring it out again and last for several weeks. The amount of watering that you need do will of course depend upon climate and rainfall, but remember that shallow watering causes the roots to grow near the surface where they cannot get needed plant food, so water deep or not at all. Contrary to superstition, the best time to water is in the morning, with any time of the day being satisfactory.

On some very low-fertility, deep sands a yellow discoloration has occurred occasionally. This is due to the lack of iron, and the treatment is spraying with a solution containing 1 teaspoonful of iron sulfate (copperas) in two gallons of water on each 50 square feet of turf, a treatment which lasts several years.

Any lawn grass not properly cared for will in a matter of years become "sod bound," i. e., it forms such a dense mat above the surface of the earth that the roots cannot penetrate deeply into the soil as they should. The usual symptom is "browning out" and "dying out" and the remedy is renovating the sod with a spike roller or by punching numerous holes through the sod and soil with

a spading fork or similar instrument so that easier penetration may be made.

If you wish a luxuriant, heavy, deep green carpet you may get it by annual fertilization with any complete fertilizer. Ten pounds per 1,000 square feet applied each spring and fall will probably be more than adequate, but the best amount to use should be determined by experiment on your own particular lawn. Heavy fertilization will often be necessary to get desired growth under trees where competition for plant food and water is keen. Ask your fertilizer dealer for fertilizer with organic nitrogen if you wish to avoid too much growth shortly after application and too little later on. Naturally the more you fertilize the more you will have to mow, but you will still have to mow Centipede less than any other lawn grass given comparable treatment.

CONTROL FOR PESTS

Even though Centipede is more resistant to insects than any other grass, trouble will develop occasionally and, in that event, the following remedies are suggested for the more common troubles.

Control moles on the lawn by using a trap or a poison. Calcium cyanide or naphthalene (moth balls) is effective in early spring when young moles are in the nest. Open the runway and apply a teaspoon of either at 10-foot intervals. Be certain to replace soil in each hole.

Grubs which eat the grass roots are often the cause of dead patches in the lawn. They can be controlled by using lead arsenate at a rate of 1 pound per 100 square feet. Circular patches of dead grass, which appear during warm, damp seasons, are indications of fungus diseases. These should be treated with a commercial mixture (there are several for that purpose on the market); or spray with 1 ounce of bichloride of mercury in 10 gallons of water per 1,000 square feet. Water thoroughly to wash the chemical into the soil. Bichloride of mercury is poisonous, so handle it with care.

USE ON FARM LAWNS

Livestock may eat some of the Centipede seed heads and scatter the seed in their droppings. The seed so planted will produce Centipede plants that may spread and crowd out pasture grasses—thus making the pasture worthless for grazing, as Centipede is about the poorest of all grasses nutritionally. Consequently, we do not recommend Centipede grass for farm lawns.

OUR GUARANTEE

We guarantee all Centi-Seed which we sell to the extent of the purchase price to be as described on the container, within recognized tolerances, and we give no other or further warranty, express or implied.

WRITE CONCERNING OTHER DESIRABLE LAWN GRASSES SOLD BY NORDAN'S GRASS FARM

Presently, we have stock of following:

ZOYSIA MATRELLA
ZOYSIA TENUFOLIA
Genuine Chinese Centipede
Bermudas
Common St. Augustine
Monkey Grass

ZOYSIA JAPONICA
(Seed or Sod)
Transvaal, U-3
Bitter - Bluestem
Liriope

MEYER ZOYSIA
Centipede, PI-72,260
(Seed or Sod)
Tiffine, Tiflawn
Dichondra
(Seed or Sod)

Information available at 10c per copy:

"Fourteen Pointers on Making Good Lawns"
"Selecting A Good Southern Lawn Grass"
"Ten Pointers On Keeping Good Lawns"

"Care of the Lawn"
"Meet the Zoysia Family"
"How To Have A Beautiful Lawn"

Centipedegrass Seed Prices

The following are prices for Centipede seed postpaid anywhere in the United States. There is no sales tax on seed. Four ounces is the minimum order that we ship.

4 ounces\$ 4.25
5 to 15 ounces, per ounce\$ 1.00
16 ounces or more, per pound\$15.00

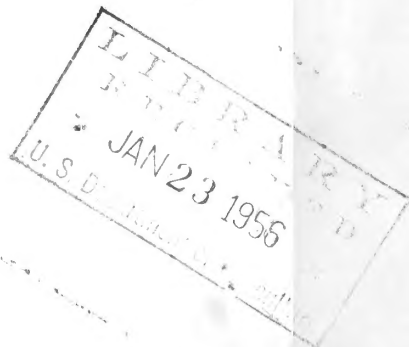
Payment by check or Money Order payable to NORDAN'S GRASS FARM must accompany order. We do not ship C.O.D. or open account. Please do not order fractions of an ounce or less than 4 ounces.

NORDAN'S GRASS FARM

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